

Members

Rep. Robert Bischoff, Chair
Rep. Ron Liggett
Rep. Phyllis Pond
Rep. William Ruppel
Sen. James Merritt, Vice-Chair
Sen. David Ford
Sen. Katie Wolf
Sen. Allie Craycraft



INDIANA STATE FAIR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

LSA Staff:

Bernadette Bartlett, Fiscal Analyst for the
Committee
Susan Montgomery, Attorney for the Committee

Authority: IC 15-1-1.5-4

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MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: August 3, 1999
Meeting Time: 1:00 P.M.
Meeting Place: 1202 E. 38th Street, IN State
Fairgrounds, Board Room
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Rep. Robert Bischoff, Chair; Rep. Ron Liggett; Rep. Phyllis Pond; Rep. William Ruppel; Sen. James Merritt, Vice-Chair; Sen. David Ford; Sen. Katie Wolf; Sen. Allie Craycraft.

Members Absent: None.

Call to Order and Committee Charge. Rep. Robert Bischoff, Chair of the Committee, called the meeting to order. After the introduction of the Committee members, Susan Montgomery, Attorney for the Committee, read the charge of the Committee which is as follows (IC 15-1-1.5-8):

- (1) Serve as liaison between the State Fair Commission, the State Fair Board, and the General Assembly.
- (2) Review policies affecting the activities of the commission, the state fair, the facilities at the fairgrounds, and the property owned by the commission.
- (3) Provide long range guidance for the commission and the board.
- (4) Review annually the commission's and the board's budgets and other accounts and report financial conditions to the Legislative Council. Further advise the Budget Committee regarding appropriations and other financial matters concerning the commission and the board.
- (5) Propose, review, and make recommendations concerning legislation affecting the commission and the board.

¹Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

Report from the Indiana State Fair Commission. Bill Stinson, Executive Director of the State Fair Commission, provided the committee with a report from the Indiana State Fair Commission. He described the fire at the State Fairgrounds that had occurred the night before. He stressed that there were no injuries. The building that burned formerly housed the Future Farmers of America (FFA) exhibit. However, the building no longer served in this capacity and was primarily used for storage. FFA members were boarding in the building; however, they were not in the building at the time of the fire. An electrical short was the suspected cause of the fire. The building was valued at an estimated \$35,000. All buildings on the grounds are covered by the state's self-insurance.

New Projects for 1999. Mr. Stinson reported that the Commission has almost completed the renovation of the sheep barn and has upgraded the high voltage electrical system. In 1997, the General Assembly appropriated \$8.5 million for these projects. The upgrade of the high voltage electrical system had no bearing on the recent fire. The upgrade is designed to improve capacity to bring power from the perimeters into the buildings.

The Commission plans three major facility improvements that will bring buildings into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Two handicap lifts are being installed on either end of the grand stand as well as a deck for handicapped seating. One of the walks will also be rebuilt to comply with ADA. In the Hulman Home and Family Arts Building, portions of the mezzanine have been leveled to provide better accommodations. The new FFA Pavilion is also under construction. Finally, a brick wall beautification project with the name of the Indiana State Fair Grounds is being installed at the corner of 38th and Fall Creek. This project, nearing completion, was funded in part by the use of the ISTEIA (the federal intermodal service transportation enhancement account).

Projects for the Year 2000. According to Mr. Stinson, projects for the year 2000 will be financed with a combination of legislative appropriations in the 1999 budget and Riverboat revenue. The replacement of the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system in the Pepsi Coliseum will begin immediately after the fair. The system should be in place by the start of the hockey season.

The Commission plans to spend \$1.6 million to renovate the Lincoln Theater to make the building more user friendly for year round use. Other improvements, such as handicap rails and additional women's restrooms, are also needed.

The Commission is considering plans for the Draft Horse Barn. One option is to spend over \$1 million to remodel. A second option, which would cost \$6 million, is to tear down the barn and rebuild. Before the Commission commits to an option, they want to evaluate the operations of the sheep barn and make sure that the sheep barn produces the expected return on the investment. The Commission plans to wait a year or two before making a decision on the Draft Horse Barn.

The time frame on these projects is subject to the issuance of bonds. Initially, the Commission had planned a \$39.5 million four-year schedule. However, due to the level of the 1999 appropriations the four-year plan might take eight. The Commission plans to remodel other pavilions. Fairgrounds 2000, unveiled in the Spring of 1996, outlines

the Commission plans. About every building will receive major improvements at a cost of \$3 to \$3.5 million per building.

Riverboat Revenue. Mr. Stinson informed the Committee that Riverboat revenue is higher than anticipated. Riverboat revenues were initially estimated at \$2 million. They are now nearing \$5 million. The Commission has the option to bond with Riverboat money. The State Fair Commission receives \$0.15 of the \$3 that the state receives for every admission to a riverboat. In 1999, Riverboat revenue generated between \$4.5 and \$5 million for the Commission. The Commission decides if the money is to be used for capital projects or preventative maintenance projects. During the last year budget negotiations, the Commission was encouraged to use revenue generated from facility charges and riverboats to issue a bond to help pay for expenses as opposed to relying on General Fund appropriations.

The State Fair Commission. Mr. Stinson noted that the State Fair Commission consists of seven members. The Governor appoints five members. The presiding officer of the State Fair Board and the Commissioner of Agriculture or designee also serve on the Commission. The State Fair Commission operates and manages the State Fair Ground facilities year round.

Sen. Craycraft asked for a list of commission members. Rep. Bischoff inquired about the terms of the members.

The State Fair Board. Mr. Stinson also reported that the State Fair Board consists of seventeen members. Seven members, one from each agricultural district, are appointed by the Governor. Seven members are also elected from each agricultural district. Additional membership includes the Governor's designee, the Commissioner of Agriculture's designee, and a representative of the Purdue University cooperative extension service. The State Fair Board operates and manages the State Fair.

HSI Show Productions. A presentation of the HSI Show Productions to the Committee was postponed. HSI is the largest client of the State Fair. Sen. Merritt indicated that HSI has requested some improvements in the West Pavilion for the last couple years. He recommended that HSI present their needs to the Committee. However, representatives were unavailable to attend the meeting. Sen. Merritt stressed that the Committee needs to work to maintain their current clients. According to Sen. Merritt, the overall emotional and financial damage of losing the flower and patio show would be devastating. The State Fairgrounds are a dependable facility that can be booked year after year.

Mr. Stinson stated that show promoters want free-span buildings with no girders. These types of buildings were not available when many of the state fair buildings were built. He noted that rather than spending millions stabilizing existing buildings, it might be more cost-effective to propose the construction of a new free span building at the Fairgrounds.

Information on "the Barn." Sen. Merritt suggested inviting Betsy Kranz, Executive Director of the Center for Agricultural Science and Heritage (known as "the Barn"), to attend the next Committee meeting so that the Committee could enhance its understanding of the functions and activities of the Barn.

Attending State Fair Commission Meetings. Rep. Bischoff indicated that he would like to have members of the Committee, either one Republican and one Democrat, or one member appointed on a rotating basis, to attend Commission meetings. He indicated that Legislative Services was researching the possibilities of having per diem paid for Commission attendance out of the Committee budget.

Rep. Ruppel encouraged members to attend Commission meetings, particularly when the Commission presents reports on business activity. He stressed that the State Fairgrounds provide a niche for year-round activities. The Fairgrounds also can accommodate smaller shows.

Rep. Pond suggested that a Committee appointee could be made each month to attend the Commission meeting and report to the Advisory Committee. She stressed that it is important that Committee members are active and understand what is happening at the State Fair.

Mr. Stinson indicated that the Committee members receive notices of and minutes from Commission meetings. During winter months, the Commission may meet once every two months.

The Committee moved and seconded a motion that instructs Ms. Montgomery, attorney for the Committee, to draft a letter or petition, whichever format is more appropriate, on behalf of Rep. Bischoff and the Committee, requesting reimbursement from Committee funds for attendance at Commission meetings.

Governor's Fellow. Mr. Stinson introduced Polly Kubesch, a Governor's Fellow, to the Committee.

Next Committee Meeting. Mr. Stinson invited all members to the opening of the State Fair on Wednesday, August 11, which will be preceded by the annual ham breakfast. Sen. Craycraft suggested that the next committee meeting coincide with the opening day. The next committee meeting was then scheduled for Wednesday, August 11, at 9:00 a.m., in the Board Room of the State Fair Commission. The Commission is to meet immediately thereafter, and committee members were encouraged to attend.

Adjournment. Rep Bischoff adjourned the meeting at 2:40 p.m. Members were invited to tour the facilities.